



April 14, 2016

VX-31 Sailor named IWV Senior Bluejacket of the Year



Hospital Corpsman First Class Jarrod Criss, center, celebrates with fellow Air Test and Evaluation Squadron (VX) 31 members after his receipt of the Senior Bluejacket of the Year Award during the March 19 ceremony at the Kerr McGee Center in Ridgecrest.

NAVAL AIR WARFARE CENTER WEAPONS DIVISION, China Lake, Calif. – The Indian Wells Valley Council of the Navy League named its Bluejacket of the Year winners during the 45 th annual dinner on March 19 at the Kerr McGee Center in Ridgecrest.

Hospital Corpsman First Class Jarrod Criss of Air Test and Evaluation Squadron (VX) 31 at Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division was named Senior Bluejacket of the Year.

“I was pretty happy; it’s a big deal around here,” Criss said. “I’ve been working hard and trying to gain a lot of collateral duties in addition to my primary ones around the squadron. I’m trying to do more to help out the community, and I believe that was reflected in winning the award.”

Criss, who joined VX-31 in 2014, is the Medical Department leading petty officer with the Search and Rescue Helicopter team. He is one of the team’s senior medic aircrewmen, and was an integral part of the successful rescue of three individuals on three separate SAR missions which included VX-31’s highest night rescue at 10,000 feet. Additionally, he is the supervisor for the Night Imaging and Threat Evaluation Lab and teaches night vision



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goggle refresher classes for Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake, VX-9 and VX-31.

"I really enjoy my job," Criss said. "It's one of those jobs that I feel falls under the saying of, 'Choose a job you love and you'll never have to work a day in your life.' The Navy's sent me to some pretty sweet places to be doing the job that I do."

A native of Salem, Ohio, Criss enlisted in the Navy in 1999. He reported to his first command in Camp Lejeune, North Carolina and deployed to Afghanistan from 2001 to 2002. During his time in service, he's served as the senior line corpsman for a security detachment tasked with the security of the USS Mount Whitney (LCC/JCC20) while it was being used as a communications hub for the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa.

He's also served as a military medical advisor to the Iraqi Army in Fallujah, Iraq during a crucial time when the city was being rebuilt after U.S. ground forces drove Al-Qaeda terrorists from the city. Criss was awarded his Search and Rescue Medical Technician designation while serving with the Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 25 in Guam and is credited with seven rescues and eight medical evacuations in the Northern Marianas Island area of responsibility.

"My family is what drives me," Criss said. "I have a little boy, a little girl and a loving wife. They keep me going and wanting to do better. As long as I'm doing well, I can create a better life for them."

Criss' personal awards include an Air Medal, Joint Service Commendation Medal, a Navy Commendation Medal, three Navy Achievement medals, an Army Achievement Medal a Combat Action Ribbon, and a Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal.